

6.0 Cumulative Effects

The effects of the Proposed Action when combined with the effects of other actions discussed in this section do not result in cumulatively significant impacts. Cumulative effects are caused by the aggregate of past, present, and reasonably foreseeable future actions, regardless of what agency or person undertakes them. These effects can result from individually minor, but collectively significant, actions taking place over a period of time (40 CFR 1500-1508). The cumulative effect analysis in the LANL SWEIS already documents the regional effect of the expanded operations alternative and provides context for this EA. This section considers the Proposed Action and its possible effects on resources as related to any ongoing or reasonably foreseeable future actions.

Several resources were dismissed from cumulative effects consideration because they would not be affected by the Proposed Action and could not contribute collectively to ongoing or reasonably foreseeable actions (see Table 2). These were land use, floodplains and wetlands, and cultural, visual, and biological resources. Five other resources analyzed in this EA would not contribute significantly to cumulative effects, because the Proposed Action would not have major long-term or irreversible effects on water quality, geology (and soils), noise, human health, transportation, infrastructure, environmental justice, and socioeconomics. Air quality and waste management are discussed further in this section. This analysis concludes that there would not be cumulative effects on air quality, waste management, or other aspects of the environment. Moreover, some positive effects to resources, such as environmental restoration, would occur as a consequence of the Proposed Action to implement a corrective measure at MDA H within TA-54. In addition, the closure of Pajarito Road also reduces potential for negative cumulative effects since the public is less exposed to potential accidents associated with any corrective exposure option.

Air Quality The Proposed Action would not result in cumulatively significant impacts to air quality at LANL. There are no future actions likely to occur at LANL that might cause cumulative effects in the area of the Proposed Action. The attainment status of the area would not change. Other LANL operations might be curtailed to maintain LANL emissions within permitted levels. Therefore, the Proposed Action is not expected to result in a cumulative adverse effect on air quality at LANL.

Waste Management and Environmental Restoration Cumulative effects are postulated to be additive. For example, the impacts of corrective action-related waste management could be connected to management of waste from day-to-day routine operations, particularly if the same waste management facilities were used. The disposition of LLW from the MDA H inventory would contribute to the total volume of waste already in Area G. Further, estimated cumulative impacts are intended to represent the environmental impact range associated with specifically proposed actions or similar types of actions that may be undertaken eventually, in accordance with NMED-approved RFI and CMS implementation.

Waste generation at LANL during the next 10 years, both from decontamination and demolition of buildings and through environmental restoration efforts, could be large. However, waste types and quantities generated by the proposed excavation and removal of wastes from the MDA H shafts would be within the capacity of existing waste management systems and would not be

likely to result in substantial effects to existing waste management disposal operations. Wastes generated by this remediation effort would be handled in accordance with applicable laws, regulations, and DOE orders and would be transferred to appropriate waste management facilities. Existing waste treatment and disposal facilities would be used according to specific waste types. When added to the much larger volume of environmental restoration waste generated at LANL, the Proposed Action would not contribute to significant adverse cumulative effects.

Implementation of a corrective measure option at MDA H would provide long-term beneficial impacts through the reduction of risks from contamination. Currently, LANL programs operate within regulatory requirements. The Proposed Action is an extension of LANL operations. It is expected that the cumulative effects would be commensurate with existing effects. DOE and LANL are pursuing an active program of reducing potential health risk through an as-low-as-reasonably-achievable (ALARA) policy for all personnel and the public. In addition to the reduction of cumulative effects associated with the Proposed Action, reduction of cumulative effects would be anticipated through meeting ALARA standards, preventing pollution, and minimizing waste.